



HIDDEN SPRINGS -- a Wildlife Habitat Community

Paul and Susie Headlee, Hidden Springs residents and Habitat Stewards for the National Wildlife Federation

Sight, sound, and color are some of the qualities present in the community of Hidden Springs, Idaho. What is special is that much of these qualities come in the form of watchable wildlife. When you visit Hidden Springs, it is easy to see that the community residents are passionate about giving back to nature. Located at the base of the foothills about 10 miles northwest of downtown Boise, this planned community was started nearly 10 years ago. There are now about 600 occupied homes (with the capacity of only 300 more).

If you visit Hidden Springs you'll also begin to notice some things not present in other communities. Some are subtle like bird feeders

and native plants gardens; others, like owl and kestrel boxes, raptor perches, and preserved open space areas, stand out. Stop for a while and you'll begin to notice redwing blackbirds, mallards, California quail, redbellied hawks, American kestrels, rabbits, and critical habitat like cottonwoods, willows, and wetlands. Larger critters are present, but are not always easy to spot. They include great-horned and barn owls, porcupines, badgers,



Michael Weigand from Habiscapes leads Hidden Springs Community members in a hike around the wetlands and pond. Visit www.habiscapes.net to learn about how Michael can help you design your backyard to attract wildlife. Photo by Paul Headlee.

raccoons, coyotes, mule deer, and the occasional pronghorn antelope or mountain lion.

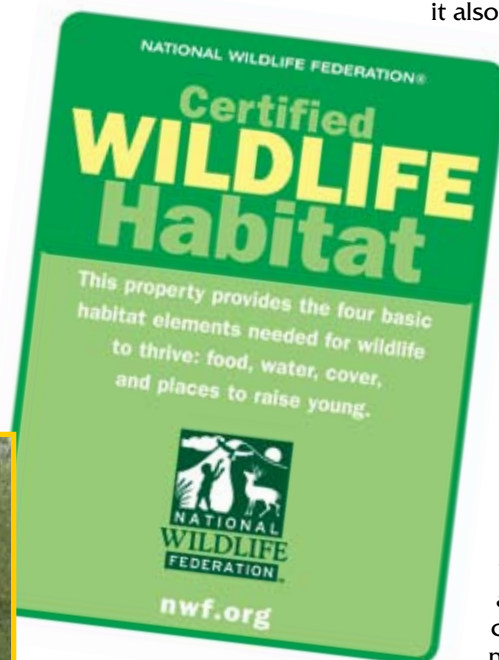
Look again and you will see small yard signs telling you that the residence has been certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a

was certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a community habitat site in May 2005.

Not only does this emphasis on wildlife provide countless hours of enjoyment to the individual residents, it also brings community members closer together.

For instance, wildlife sightings become the topic of discussion among neighbors. Additionally, many educational activities are offered by the community throughout the year. For instance, nature walks, living with wildlife presentations, environmental movie night, workshops on wildlife gardening and wildlife photography, and a wetlands celebration just to name a few. Residents also share an on-going birding list and raise funds to fill the community feeders.

This community's emphasis on wildlife is not by chance and there are two primary factors driving this effort. The first is a passion



backyard habitat site that provides food, water, cover, and nesting areas for wildlife. There are over 65 certified backyards in Hidden Springs. After a short while, the larger picture comes into focus, this is a wildlife habitat community. The community

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Save money and maintenance

shown by the residents to get involved and make a difference. This is evidenced in many ways, including the Open Space council that has met monthly for over five years, the memorial garden spearheaded by the Hidden Springs Garden Club, and the participation in community cleanups. The second factor is simply a stable funding source. This funding source comes from a 1/4% fee levied on each property sale, which is then placed into an environmental fund. This concept came to the community via the developer who successfully implemented this transfer fee in a similar community near Chicago.

The transfer fee has allowed Hidden Springs to hire a full-time Open Space Coordinator, and embark on larger projects such as noxious weed control, re-vegetation of disturbed areas, trail maintenance, native plant demonstration gardens, planting of a cornfield for habitat, and the tending of an orchard.

With the community organic farm in its second year of operation and enthusiastic teachers at the Hidden Springs Charter School, the possibilities for a better understanding and appreciation for natural resources continue to grow. Residents are now considering pursuing the National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitat certification for the Hidden Springs Charter School.

Community developments, new and old, replace wildlife habitat with human habitat. However, residents in this

community are doing what they can to give back to nature what was displaced by their own housing needs. In some ways Hidden Springs is providing a greater diversity of habitats for watchable wildlife. Hidden Springs residents have learned from other communities and we hope others can learn from Hidden Springs. We encourage you to take closer look at the Hidden Springs and would be delighted to give you a tour of the sight sound and color found in our community. Contact us at (208) 229-3434 or headlee@ctcweb.net

For more information on how to certify your yard as a Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation, visit <http://www.nwf.org>.

A screech-owl box made by Matthew Warnke can be purchased at the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise.

Eagle Scouts Donate Nesting Boxes to The Peregrine Fund

Mark Purdy and Sue Bello, World Center for Birds of Prey

The American kestrel is the smallest and most numerous of the North American falcons. Kestrels are cavity nesters, using natural hollows in trees, cacti, dirt banks and cliffs, or man-made boxes, building ledges, and other cavities in buildings. Kestrels feed mainly on crickets, grasshoppers, mice, voles, lizards, and snakes. This falcon searches for its prey from an overlooking perch or by hovering in the air. When the prey is spotted, the kestrel will plunge down to catch it.

The Peregrine Fund sells kestrel boxes in the gift shop at the Velma Morrison Interpretive Center at the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho. The boxes provide a safe nesting place for kestrels to rear their young. The staff at The Peregrine Fund's the Velma Morrison Interpretive Center wishes to say thank you to Josh Lee of BSA Troop 61 from Boise, for building 20 kestrel nest boxes and donating the boxes to The Peregrine Fund. Josh did not work alone in getting the boxes constructed. He organized teams of Scouts to obtain donated materials, cut-out the box pieces, and construct the boxes. Josh really made this Eagle Project a team effort.

The staff also wishes to say thank you to Matthew Warnke of BSA Troop 611 from Clackamas, Oregon. Matthew chose to construct and donate both kestrel and screech-owl boxes. This is the first time the Interpretive Center has had screech-owl boxes available for sale. To distinguish a kestrel box from a screech-owl box, Matthew burned a kestrel or screech-owl label on the front of each box. Matthew also provided mounting hardware with each box.

These scouts are leading the way to improving our environment. Their efforts in making these boxes benefit our organization from the sale of the boxes, and more importantly, benefits birds in providing nesting places.

A recent article in the Audubon at Home section of Audubon Magazine (May-June 2005) titled A Falcon With Flair, gives good information on placing a kestrel nest box. The article advises that the box should be mounted at least 10 feet high in open country such as a meadow or abandoned field. The article also suggests that the box should face away from "prevailing storms (usually south or east)."

To purchase an American kestrel or screech-owl box, from the Peregrine Fund, call (208) 362-8257. The boxes sell for \$10 plus shipping, and like all gift shop profits, the money goes directly to Peregrine Fund programs. For instructions on how to build your own bird houses, nesting platforms, and boxes, contact your regional nongame Idaho Fish and Game biologist or Sara Focht at (208) 287-2750 or at sfocht@idfg.idaho.gov.

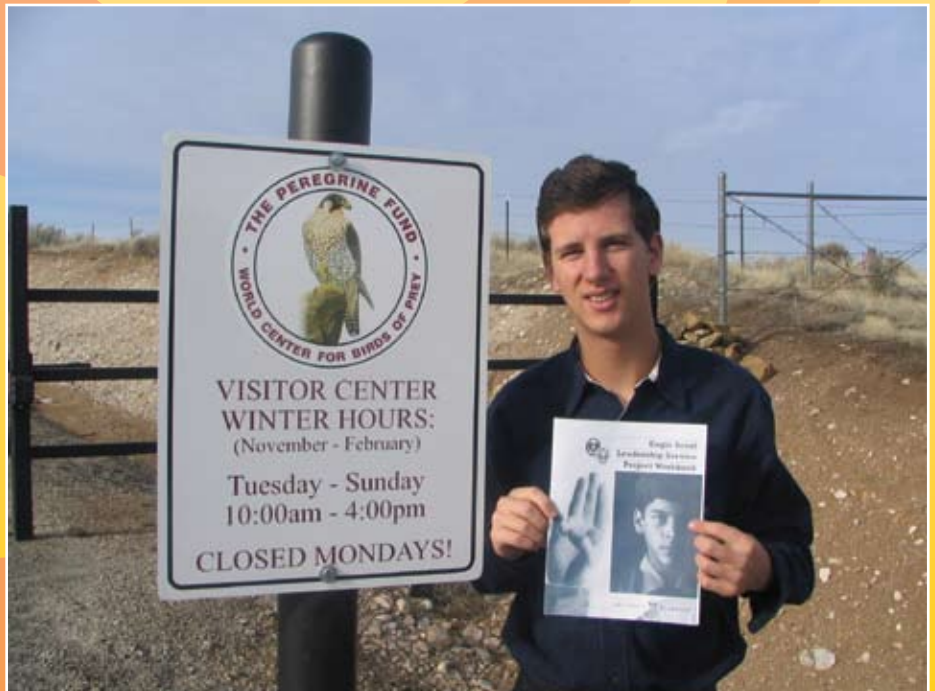


Wildlife Volunteers Help Bird Banding Efforts

Fall bird banding has begun! Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Idaho Bird Observatory would like to take this opportunity to thank those who sewed bird bags for Idaho Bird Observatory. The donation of these bags helps researchers track the population trends and habitat suitability of songbirds. Zack Thomas (Idaho Falls), Lynn Sheridan (Coeur d'Alene), D.E. Larson (Caldwell), Heidi Theios (Hailey), Jean Retzler (Coeur d'Alene), Mary Lou Gurr (Boise), Students of Angie Beck at Project Coeur d'Alene Alternative School.



Zack Thomas (middle) displays bird banding bags he created for his Eagle Scout Project. Zack organized a team of scouts to produce over 80 bags! Thank you, Zack! Also pictured are Keiton Johnson, (left) and Sean Brown (right).



The World Center for Birds of Prey received 20 donated kestrel boxes from Josh Lee (Boy Scout Troop 61). Boxes are on sale!

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Idaho Department of Commerce
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fall

Wildlife Events

Craters of the Moon-Arco/ Idaho Falls

Oct. 14 — Earth Science Week Hike:
9AM - 3PM., 4 miles.

Explore the amazing geology of Craters of the Moon. The park geologist will provide a presentation at the visitor center followed by a hike to view volcanic features in the field.

Please contact the Visitor Center at (208)527-3257 (or email us at: crmo_information@nps.gov) to make a reservation for this event.

Burley

Oct. 20-21 — WILD about Early Learners teacher's workshop.

This is a variation of the popular PROJECT WILD workshop and is geared toward teachers of younger students. Contact Lori Adams of Idaho Department of Fish and Game at (208) 287-2889 or ladams@idfg.idaho.gov

MK Nature Center, Boise

Oct. 27 & 28 — Creatures of the Night-Friday & Saturday, 6:30-8:30PM

Are you nocturnal on Halloween? If you are, come in your costume to the MK Nature Center! We will learn all about bats, owls, and other nocturnal animals. Be sure to bring a flashlight and a sense of adventure for a night-time walk. Hot chocolate and popcorn will be served at the end of the night to warm us all up. You can pick up your tickets ahead of time at the MK Nature Center. Call 334-2225 for more information.

Audience: Family friendly

Cost: \$2 per person, babies under one free.

Moscow/Pullman Christmas Bird Count

Dec. 16 — Contact Dave Holick for details (208) 882-5556.

Lewiston/Clarkston Christmas Bird Count

Dec. 30 — Contact Terry Gray for details (208) 285-1639

Use Native Plants in Landscaping - A Lesson in Stewardship

*Kent Fothergill
Conservation Seeding and
Restoration, Inc.*

Many people choose to live in Idaho because of the beauty, splendor, and environmental richness of the state. Former Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus called this "Idahoan's second paycheck". If you place value on this "second paycheck", shouldn't your home landscape reflect this value also?

There are numerous benefits to landscaping with native plants: beauty, wildlife habitat, sense of place, water conservation, and being environmentally sound. Not only does a native landscape provide food and shelter for wildlife within the backyard, but it also provides a source for seed dispersal into adjacent areas where native plant populations have been eliminated or reduced. This aspect is especially important in areas where human housing is expanding into undeveloped open space. Non-native landscaping plants such as: Ox-eye Daisy, Bachelor Button, and Myrtle Spurge disperse from home landscapes into surrounding open lands. Much of Idaho's open space is in poor condition due to land management practices that have not been compatible with retention of native plant communities. Backyard conservation/restoration projects can be a crucial component in providing wildlife the things they need and restoring surrounding lands.

Native plants may be more expensive than plants purchased at a mass retailer. Initial costs are offset by

Thank You to All Contributors

The following people made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or let us know of a tax check-off donation between July 1-September 1, 2006. This list represents those marked the contributor box when they donated to the Nongame Program, however, many subscribers not listed here have contributed generously and Idaho's Nongame wildlife thanks you ALL!

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Sarah Allman
Phillip Baldwin
Al Balish
Dianne and Al Bolt
Martin Brownstone
Roberto Cadiz
David Couch
Brent and Patty Dame
Julia Daugherty-Willig
Randy Greer
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Walt Wieme

savings down the road due to the fact that native plants, placed with care, are adapted to Idaho soils and climates, requiring less fertilizer, pesticides, and water than most traditional landscape plants. Native plants also provide multiple benefits for wildlife: food, beneficial insects, nesting materials, thermal cover, hiding, etc. It is relatively easy to find information about native plant choices and planning your landscape. However, very little information is available on the aspect of nativescaping that is most crucial to the success of the project- stewardship.

“Whether the project is 600 acres of restored wild lands or a backyard corner, proper stewardship is critical to a successful outcome.” Steven Paulsen, General Manager and Founder of Conservation Seeding and Restoration, Inc. advises.

A traditional landscape is a static collection of plants that requires constant maintenance to remain aesthetically pleasing. A nativescape, in contrast with a traditionally landscaped area, is a living entity that must be nurtured through time toward maturity, a process we call stewardship. This difference in approach is best illustrated by a comparison of a traditional landscape lawn and a similar feature in a nativescape.

The traditional lawn requires inputs of water, mowing, fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide, and other maintenance items (e.g. aeration, removal of lawn clippings, etc.). Through traditional lawn maintenance methods, we force the grass to grow a certain texture and growth form that is against the grass's natural growth patterns. Because the plant is under continuous growth stress, poisons are required to keep competition (weeds) and predation (e.g. insects) from disrupting the desired result.

The native lawn is climate-adapted and able to flourish with minimal additional water. The growth form of the species chosen is naturally short in stature, so mowing is dictated by aesthetic choice. Mowing less frees time and labor for other pursuits and creates an opportunity to reduce lawn mower emissions and reduce noise pollution. Native grasses that are local to your area, are well adapted to hold their space - minimizing need for weed abatement. Additionally, the grasses have their own defenses against harmful insects and provide habitat for beneficial insects which lessens needs for insecticides. With nativescaping, we move from *dominion* over the landscape to *encouragement* of the landscape.

Stewardship activities reflect human values. Deadheading the flowers in your yard prolongs the bloom for nectar utilizing insects, but denies goldfinches the tasty seeds they love. Stewardship of a native yard needn't be complex, the key is to relax, watch, learn, act when needed, and enjoy the show.

Non-native plants are often the major component of home landscaping. Many people bring plants from places they hold dear as a memory, such as yucca or sugar maple. Non-native plants are also utilized as human food plants within a home landscape: apples, pears, zucchini, etc. Some non-native plants have captured us through beauty such as: hybrid roses and daffodils. It is ok to utilize some non-native plants within your



Common branded skipper might be attracted to your native garden. Photo by Kent Gothergill, Conservation Seeding and Restoration, Inc.



Less water, less maintenance, and a connection to Idaho's native plants! This photo shows an example of a nativescape. Photo by Julie Regula, Conservation Seeding and Restoration, Inc.

landscape. However, if you value native birds and wildlife within your backyard – utilization of native plants allows your landscape to reflect your values, a greater harmony to exist within your home, and continues the legacy of beauty for future generations of Idahoans. There are some non-native plants that are categorized as “invasives.” These plants are never ok to plant in your yard and are not legal to sell at commercial retail nurseries. For a list of Idaho's invasive plants to avoid, visit the Idaho Weed Awareness Website at <http://www.idahoweedawareness.org> and click on Identification.

For more information on native plants, landscaping, and native plant sales contact your local chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society (<http://www.idahonativeplants.org/>) or Conservation Seeding and Restoration, Inc. (www.csr-inc.com). Other sources include the Idaho Botanical Garden in Boise (<http://www.idahobotanicalgarden.org/>) or at (208) 843-8649. Idaho Department of Fish and Game has a new nongame leaflet on using native plants for attracting wildlife. This leaflet can be viewed on-line at <http://www.fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/nongame/publications.cfm>.